Order for the Blessing of the Sick

Introduction

376 The blessing of the sick by the ministers of the Church is a very ancient custom, having its origins in the practice of Christ himself and his apostles. When ministers visit those who are sick, they are to respect the provisions of Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum, nos. 42-56, but the primary concern of every minister should be to show the sick how much Christ and his Church are concerned for them.

377 The text of Pastoral Care of the Sick indicates many occasions for blessing the sick and provides the blessing formularies.

378 The present order may be used by a priest or deacon. It may also be used by a layperson, who follows the rites and prayers designated for a lay minister. While maintaining the structure and chief elements of the rite, the minister should adapt the celebration to the circumstances of the place and the people involved.

379 When just one sick person is to be blessed, a priest or a deacon may use the short formulary given in no. 406.

Order of Blessing

A. Order for the Blessing of Adults

Introductory Rites

380 When the community has gathered, the minister says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All make the sign of the cross and reply:

Amen.

381 A minister who is a priest or a deacon greets those present in the following or other suitable words, taken mainly from sacred Scripture.

Peace be with you (this house) and all who live here.

Or:

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All make the following or some other suitable reply.

And with your spirit.

382 A lay minister greets those present in the following words.

Brothers and sisters, let us bless the Lord, who went about doing good and healing the sick. Blessed be God now and for ever.

R. Blessed be God now and for ever.

Or:

R. Amen.

383 In the following or similar words, the minister prepares the sick and all present for the blessing.

The Lord Jesus, who went about doing good works and healing sickness and infirmity of every kind, commanded his disciples to care for the sick, to pray for them, and to lay hands on them. In this celebration we shall entrust our sick brothers and sisters to the care of the Lord, asking that he will enable them to bear their pain and suffering in the knowledge that, if they accept their share in the pain of his own passion, they will also share in its power to give comfort and strength.

Reading of the Word of God

384 A reader, another person present, or the minister reads a text of sacred Scripture, taken preferably from the texts given in Pastoral Care of the Sick and the Lectionary for Mass. The readings chosen should be those that best apply to the physical and spiritual condition of those who are sick.

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians:

1:3-7

The God of all consolation.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God. For as Christ's sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow. If we are afflicted, it is for your encouragement and salvation; if we are encouraged, it is for your encouragement, which enables you to endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is firm, for we know that as you share in the sufferings, you also share in the encouragement.

385 Or:

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Matthew:

11:28-30

Come to me and I will refresh you.

Jesus said to the crowds: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

386 Or:

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Mark:

6:53-56

They laid the sick in the marketplace.

After making the crossing, Jesus and his disciples came to land at Gennesaret and tied up there. As they were leaving the boat, people immediately recognized him. They scurried about the surrounding country and began to bring in the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. Whatever villages or towns or countryside he entered, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak; and as many as touched it were healed.

387 As circumstances suggest, one of the following responsorial psalms may be sung or said, or some other suitable song.

R. Lord, you have preserved my life from destruction.

Isaiah 38

Once I said,
"**In the noontime of life I must depart!**
To the gates of the nether world I shall be consigned
for the rest of my years." R.

I said, "I shall see the LORD no more
in the land of the living.
No longer shall I behold my fellow men
among those who dwell in the world." R.

My dwelling, like a shepherd's tent,
is struck down and borne away from me;
You have folded up my life, like a weaver
who severs the last thread. R.

Those live whom the LORD protects;
yours . . . the life of my spirit.
You have given me health and life. R.

Psalm 102:2-3, 24-25

R. (v. 2) O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come to you.

388 As circumstances suggest, the minister may give those present a brief explanation of the biblical text, so that they may understand through faith the meaning of the celebration.

Intercessions

389 The intercessions are then said. The minister introduces them and an assisting minister or one of those present announces the intentions. From the following intentions those best suited to the occasion may be used or adapted, or other intentions that apply to those who are sick and to the particular circumstances may be composed.

The minister says:

The Lord Jesus loves our brothers and sisters who are ill. With trust let us pray to him that he will comfort them with his grace, saying:

R. Lord, give those who are sick the comfort of your presence.

Assisting minister:

Lord Jesus, you came as healer of body and of spirit, in order to cure all our ills.

R.

Assisting minister:

You were a man of suffering, but it was our infirmities that you bore, our sufferings that you endured.

R.

Assisting minister:

You chose to be like us in all things, in order to assure us of your compassion.

R.

Assisting minister:

You experienced the weakness of the flesh in order to deliver us from evil.

R.

Assisting minister:

At the foot of the cross your Mother stood as companion in your sufferings, and in your tender care you gave her to us as our Mother.

R.

Assisting minister:

It is your wish that in our own flesh we should fill up what is wanting in your sufferings for the sake of your Body, the Church.

R.

390 Instead of the intercessions or in addition to them, one of the following litanies taken from Pastoral Care of the Sick, nos. 245 and 138, may be used.

Minister:

You bore our weakness and carried our sorrows: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Minister:

You felt compassion for the crowd, and went about doing good and healing the sick: Christ, have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy.

Minister:

You commanded your apostles to lay their hands on the sick in your name: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

391 Or:

The minister says:

Let us pray to God for our brothers and sisters and for all those who devote themselves to caring for them.

Assisting minister:

Bless N. and N. and fill them with new hope and strength: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Relieve their pain: Lord, have mercy.

R.

Assisting minister:

Free them from sin and do not let them give way to temptation: Lord, have mercy.

R.

Assisting minister:

Sustain all the sick with your power: Lord, have mercy.

R.

Assisting minister:

Assist all who care for the sick: Lord, have mercy.

R.

Assisting minister:

Give life and health to our brothers and sisters on whom we lay our hands in your name: Lord, have mercy.

R.

Prayer of Blessing

392 A minister who is a priest or deacon may, as circumstances suggest, lay his hands on the head of each sick person, and then say the prayer of blessing.

Lord, our God,
you sent your Son into the world
to bear our infirmities
and to endure our sufferings.
For N. and N., your servants who are sick,
we ask that your blessing will give them strength
to overcome their weakness
through the power of patience and the comfort of hope
and that with your aid they will soon be restored to health.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

393 Or, without the laying on of hands:

Lord Jesus,
who went about doing good and healing all,
we ask you to bless your friends who are sick.
Give them strength in body, courage in spirit, and patience with pain.
Let them recover their health,
so that, restored to the Christian community,
they may joyfully praise your name,
for you live and reign for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

394 A lay minister traces the sign of the cross on the forehead of each sick person and says the following prayer of blessing.

Lord, our God,
who watch over your creatures with unfailing care,
keep us in the safe embrace of your love.
With your strong right hand raise up your servants (N. and N.)
and give them the strength of your own power.
Minister to them and heal their illnesses,
so that they may have from you the help they long for.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

395 Or, for one sick person:

Lord and Father, almighty and eternal God,
by your blessing you give us strength and support in our frailty:
turn with kindness toward this your servant N.
Free him/her from all illness and restore him/her to health,
so that in the sure knowledge of your goodness
he/she will gratefully bless your holy name.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

396 After the prayer of blessing, the minister invites all present to pray for the protection of the Blessed Virgin. They may do so by singing or reciting a Marian antiphon, for example, We turn to you for protection (Sub tuum praesidium) or Hail, Holy Queen.

Concluding Rites

397 A minister who is a priest or a deacon concludes the rite by facing the sick and saying:

May God the Father bless you.

R. Amen.

May God the Son comfort you.

R. Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit enlighten you.

R. Amen.

Then he blesses all present.

And may almighty God bless you all,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

398 A lay minister invokes the Lord's blessing on the sick and all present by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May the Lord Jesus Christ,
who went about doing good and healing the sick,
grant that we may have good health
and be enriched by his blessings.

R. Amen.

B. Order for the Blessing of Children

399 For the blessing of sick children, the texts already given are to be adapted to the children's level, but special intercessions are provided here and a special prayer of blessing.

Intercessions

400 To the following intentions others may be added that apply to the condition of the sick children and to the particular circumstances.

The minister says:

The Lord Jesus loved and cherished the little ones with a special love. Let us, then, pray to him for these sick children, saying:

R. Lord, keep them in all their ways.

Or:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

Lord Jesus, you called the little children to come to you and said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these; listen with mercy to our prayers for these children. (For this we pray:)

R.

Assisting minister:

You revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, not to the wise of this world, but to little children; give these children the proof of your love. (For this we pray:)

R.

Assisting minister:

You praised the children who cried out their Hosannas on the eve of your passion; strengthen these children and their parents with your holy comfort. (For this we pray:)

R.

Assisting minister:

You charged your disciples to take care of the sick; stand at the side of all those who so gladly devote themselves to restoring the health of these children. (For this we pray:) R.

Prayer of Blessing

401 A minister who is a priest or deacon may, as circumstances suggest, lay his hands on the head of each sick child, and then say the prayer of blessing.

Lord, our God,
your Son Jesus Christ welcomed little children and blessed them.
Stretch out your right hand over these little children, N. and N., who are sick.
Grant that, made well again,
they may return to their parents
and to the community of your holy Church
and give you thanks and praise.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

402 A lay minister, and particularly a mother or father when blessing a sick child, traces the sign of the cross on each child's forehead and then says the following prayer of blessing.

Father of mercy and God of all consolation,
you show tender care for all your creatures
and give health of soul and body.

Raise up these children
(*or* this child *or* the son/daughter you have given us)
from their (his/her) sickness.
Then, growing in wisdom and grace in your sight and ours,
they (he/she) will serve you all the days of their (his/her) life
in uprightness and holiness
and offer the thanksgiving due to your mercy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

C. Shorter Rite

403 The minister says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All reply:

Who made heaven and earth.

404 One of those present or the minister reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God.

Matthew 11:28-29

Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves."

405 As circumstances suggest, a minister who is a priest or deacon may lay hands on the sick person while saying the prayer of blessing; a lay minister may trace the sign of the cross on the sick person's forehead while saying the prayer.

Lord and Father, almighty and eternal God,
by your blessing you give us strength and support in our frailty:
turn with kindness toward your servant, N.
Free him/her from all illness and restore him/her to health,
so that in the sure knowledge of your goodness
he/she will gratefully bless your holy name.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.